



Department of
Primary Industries and
Regional Development



African swine fever (ASF): keep Australia free

With the recent spread of African swine fever throughout Europe and Asia, the disease poses a major threat to our pig industry.

What is African swine fever?

African swine fever (ASF) is a highly contagious virus that causes an often fatal disease in pigs and wild boar. The disease is similar to classical swine fever, but is caused by a different virus. Both diseases only affect pigs and are exotic to Australia. People are not affected by African swine fever or classical swine fever.

African swine fever could enter Australia by:

- illegally imported meat and dairy products being fed to pigs
- illegally imported animals or genetic material
- people returning from overseas with the virus on their clothing, footwear or equipment.

What would an outbreak mean?

Western Australia exports about 80% of its livestock and livestock products every year. African swine fever only affects pigs, but an outbreak could also impact other agricultural sectors and market access.

There is no vaccination for African swine fever and the death rate in pigs can reach 100%. If African swine fever became established in feral pig populations, it would be extremely difficult to eradicate the disease.

What can you do?

- **Reduce the risk of an outbreak:**
 - Do not feed meat, swill or any other prohibited feeds to pigs.
 - Implement a best practice biosecurity plan.
 - Ensure feral pigs cannot access domestic pigs, pig facilities and food waste (such as in farm dumps).
- **Know the signs** of African swine fever.
- **Immediately report** any signs of African swine fever to a vet.

How do I report signs of African swine fever?

If you see signs of African swine fever, immediately call:

- your private vet or
- your local [Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development \(DPIRD\)](#) vet or
- the Emergency Animal Disease hotline on **1800 675 888**.

How does African swine fever spread?

The African swine fever virus is highly contagious and very resistant to physical and environmental factors. The virus can survive in the environment and in meat products for several months or longer under favourable conditions. African swine fever virus can also spread through blood, saliva, urine, semen, skins and hides, and manure of infected animals.

The virus spreads between animals by:

- feeding pigs prohibited pig feeds (swill)
- direct contact with an infected animal
- movement of infected animals
- movement of contaminated animal products (such as semen or manure), vehicles, equipment and people.

Animals usually show signs of African swine fever 4–19 days after being infected. Infected animals can shed the virus for up to two days before they show signs of the disease.

Signs of African swine fever

Signs of African swine fever vary depending on the strain of the virus. Highly virulent strains can cause death rates of up to 100%. Less virulent strains may have a lower number of deaths with non-specific signs.

Signs of African swine fever may include:

- increased death rate
- high fever and loss of appetite
- skin reddening
- blueness of extremities (including ears)
- coughing and difficulty breathing
- diarrhoea
- vomiting
- abortions.



Signs of ASF include reddened skin as seen in the pig's ears above.

Photo credit: Pirbright Institute

Early reporting is key

Recognising and reporting African swine fever early so that we can contain the spread of the disease is the only way to reduce the enormous financial and social damage of an outbreak. If you see any of these disease signs, call:

- the emergency animal disease hotline on **1800 675 888**
- your private vet or your local DPIRD vet.

See the [Livestock Biosecurity contacts webpage](#) at agric.wa.gov.au for your nearest DPIRD vet.

Important disclaimer

The Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development and the State of Western Australia accept no liability whatsoever by reason of negligence or otherwise arising from the use or release of this information or any part of it.

© State of Western Australia (Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development), 2019